

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 08082 01 OF 02 200523Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 08082

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 8082 VICE 8162)
CORRECTED COPY MRN SHOULD READ 8082 VICE 8162

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: SAKHAROV STATEMENTS ON GAYAUSKAS, SHELKOV

1. DURING APRIL 17 VISIT TO EMBASSY'S CONSULAR SECTION, SAKHAROV HANDED EMBOFF TWO STATEMENTS, FULL TEXTS BELOW, WHICH SAKHAROV ASKED BE TRANSMITTED TO USG. SAKHAROV ALSO ASKED THAT BOTH STATEMENTS BE PASSED BY THE USG TO THE INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, 777 UN PLAZA, NEW YORK, NY. EMBOFF MADE NO SPECIFIC UNDERTAKING ON LATTER POINT BUT SAID SAKHAROV'S REQUEST WOULD BE RELAYED TO DEPARTMENT OF STATE. COPIES OF THE STATEMENTS ARE BEING POUCHED TO EUR/SOV.

2. FIRST STATEMENT CALLS FOR DEFENSE OF LITHUANIAN BALIS GAYAUSKAS, WHO RECENTLY WAS GIVEN STIFF PRISON SENTENCE IN VILNIUS, APPARENTLY BECAUSE OF HIS CONNECTION WITH THE "SOLZHENITSYN FUND" FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE USSR. SECOND STATEMENT CALLS FOR RELEASE OF SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST LEADER SHELKOV, WHO WAS ARRESTED IN TASH-
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 08082 01 OF 02 200523Z

KENT ON MARCH 14.

3. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF STATEMENT ON GAYAUSKAS FOLLOWS. BEGIN TEXT: TO WORLDWIDE PUBLIC OPINION. IN DEFENSE OF BALIS GAYAUSKAS. BALIS GAYAUSKAS WAS A PRISONER OF STALINIST AND POST-STALINIST CAMPS, HAVING BEEN SENT TO THEM IN 1949 AT THE AGE OF 23. FREED IN

1974, AFTER SERVING A 25-YEAR TERM, HE HAS AGAIN BEEN SENTENCED BY A COURT IN VILNIUS TO TEN YEARS IMPRISONMENT IN A SPECIAL REGIME CAMP AND TO FIVE (SUBSEQUENT) YEARS EXILE. THE ARREST AND SENTENCING OF GAYAUSKAS COMPRISE AN ACT OF EXTRAORDINARY CRUELTY, AN ACT THAT CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES CONTINUITY IN THE ACTIONS OF SOVIET REPRESSIVE ORGANS. IN THIS, AS IN A NUMBER OF INSTANCES, THE COURT WAS NOT ASHAMED TO CONSIDER THE SENTENCE OF STALINIST COURTS AS AN AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCE. GAYAUSKAS WAS ARRESTED DURING QUESTIONING IN CONNECTION WITH THE GINZBURG CASE. THIS GIVES US GROUNDS FOR CONSIDERING HIS ARREST ALSO AS ONE OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN AGAINST THE FUND FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. IN PRISON, WHERE HE HAS SPENT THE GREATER PART OF HIS ADULT LIFE, AS WELL AS DURING HIS BRIEF PERIOD OF FREEDOM, BALIS ENJOYED THE GREAT RESPECT AND LOVE OF HIS COMRADES FOR HIS HONESTY AND COURAGE, FOR HIS PRINCIPLES AND HIS KINDNESS.

I CALL UPON ALL HONORABLE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, ALL WHO ARE CONCERNED OVER OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, UPON ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTACTS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, UPON GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS OF THE WEST, UPON ALL LITHUANIANS LIVING ABROAD, TO COME TO THE DEFENSE OF BALIS GAYAUSKAS, A NOBLE AND BRAVE MAN WHOSE FATE HAS BEEN TRAGIC. APRIL 16, 1978. (SIGNED) A. SAKHAROV, LAUREATE OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. END TEXT.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 08082 01 OF 02 200523Z

4. INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF STATEMENT ON SHELKOV FOLLOWS.
BEGIN TEXT: TO WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, TO ALL BELIEVERS, TO ALL WHO STAND FOR OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY OF SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS, 80-YEAR-OLD CHAIRMAN OF THE ALL-UNION CHURCH OF TRUE AND FREE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS VLADIMIR ANDREYEVICH SHELKOV, WAS ARRESTED ON MARCH 14 IN TASHKENT. ALSO ARRESTED WERE FIVE OF HIS CO-RELIGIONISTS: IL'YA LEPSHIN, WHO AT THE MOMENT OF HIS ARREST WAS SERIOUSLY ILL; ARNOL'D SPALIN' SERGEY MASLOV, YELENA KRIVOVERETS, AND VIKTOR BEDARYOV. THEY ARE ALL THREATENED WITH SAVAGE REPRISAL. THEIR ARREST AND SEARCH WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SCANDALOUS VIOLENCE AND ARBITRARINESS, BY OUTRAGES AND THREATS FROM THE AUTHORITIES.

FOR MANY DECADES THE INDEPENDENT POSITION OF THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS IN CHURCH MATTERS HAS BROUGHT UPON THEM - AS IS THE CASE WITH MANY OTHER CHURCHES - EXTREMELY CRUEL PERSECUTION, BORDERING UPON RELIGIOUS GENOCIDE. THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF THE ADVENTISTS, VLADIMIR SHELKOV, HAS SPENT 23 YEARS IN PRISONS AND CAMPS, INCLUDING SEVERAL

MONTHS IN DEATH ROW AFTER A SENTENCE WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY COMMUTED TO LENGTHY IMPRISONMENT. HIS RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY, HIS ACTIVE STRUGGLE FOR THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION HAVE EARNED HIM THE VERY DEEP RESPECT AND LOVE OF HIS CO-RELIGIONISTS AND, AT THE SAME TIME, THE HATRED OF THE REPRESSIVE ORGANS. FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS HE HAS HAD TO HIDE FROM ARREST, BEING IN AN ILLEGAL STATUS. THE ARREST OF SHELKOV AND HIS CO-RELIGIONISTS IS A GREAT TRAGEDY, A VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

I CALL UPON ALL BELIEVERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, UPON THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND OTHER RELIGIOUS

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 08082 02 OF 02 182245Z POSS DUPE
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 08082
EXDIS

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND OTHER RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, UPON THE LEADERS OF GOVERNMENTS WHICH SIGNED THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT, TO OBTAIN THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF VLADIMIR SHELKOV AND HIS CO-RELIGIONISTS -- IN THE NAME OF HUMANITY, THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS. APRIL 16, 1978. (SIGNED) A. SAKHAROV, LAUREATE OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. END TEXT. END UNCLASSIFIED. TOON

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